Australian Bureau of Statistics

6523.0 - Income Distribution, Australia, 1997-98

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 05/08/1999

MEDIA RELEASE

August 05, 1999 Embargoed: 11:30 AM (AEST) 91/1999

ABS survey shows how life stages affect family income

Australia's couple families received an average weekly income of $931, one-parent families $463 and single people $411 in 1997-98, according to results from the latest household survey of income, released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This compared to $890, $432 and $391 respectively in 1996-97.

There was a continuing strong relationship between household levels of income and the life-cycle stages of families.

- Young independent single people aged under 25 had an average weekly income of $335. This rose to $526 for single people aged between 25 and 34, reflecting their higher employment rates and higher salaries. As young people enter into relationships their income rises as they often have two income earners contributing to their family income. Young couples under 35 with no dependent children received an average of $1,126 a week.

- The birth of children and the early years of child rearing contribute to reduced labour force participation of parents and lower income levels. The average income of couples with young children, eldest under five, was $973 per week. Income of couples with children increased with the age of children, in part reflecting the higher participation in paid employment of both partners. Couples with older children, eldest 15 to 24, had an average income of $1,231 a week.

- Almost two-thirds of one-parent families received most of their income from government pensions and benefits, and had an average weekly income of $317. The majority of the other one-parent families relied on earnings as their main source of income and had an average weekly income of $707.

- The level of income received by couple families was at its peak when they were between 45 and 54 years, at $1,153 a week. As parents age and children become independent, income again declines, reflecting a steady decline in labour force participation. In 1997-98 couples aged 55 to 64 received an average income of $789 a week. A third of couples in this age group had neither partner employed.

- The average incomes of those aged 65 years and over reflected the considerably lower incomes that accompany retirement. In 1997-98 the average weekly income was $460 for couples and $248 for single persons in this age group. Approximately two-thirds of older couples were dependent on government cash pensions and a quarter depended on superannuation and property income as their main source of income.

Further details are in **Income Distribution, Australia, 1997-98** (cat. no. 6523.0) which is

available from ABS bookshops.

This page last updated 8 December 2006

© Commonwealth of Australia

All data and other material produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) constitutes Commonwealth copyright administered by the ABS. The ABS reserves the right to set out the terms and conditions for the use of such material. Unless otherwise noted, all material on this website – except the ABS logo, the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, and any material protected by a trade mark – is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Australia licence